CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHA POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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UPTOWN VIGIL

BURY THE GENOCIDAL CAPITALIST SYSTEM

Progressive Labor Party members joining one of the weekly protests against Democrat Adriano Espaillat, a Dominican congressman, who votes to supports fascist Israeli genocide in Gaza. Our communist study group grows as identity politics are exposed.

NEW YORK CITY, July 1 – Every week since mid-October, a group of uptown Manhattan neighbors has protested at the office of local politician, Adriano Espaillat, to denounce his support for Israeli genocide in Gaza. Espaillat is promoted as the first Dominican U.S. Representative, yet his largest campaign donors come from pro-Israel interests. He's just another capitalist politician who supports Israeli fascism and genocide, exposing the hypocrisy of identity politics. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) has been giving leadership to this struggle, bringing our communist, internationalist, pro-working class politics to the forefront. Only through communism, where workers run society, can workers in Palestine achieve liberation.

Building the bosses' gravediggers one worker at a time

The vigils were started to protest the Israeli genocide of workers in Gaza after Hamas's offensive. Hundreds of local workers and youth have participated, many Black, Latin, Arab, and Asian. PLP members have helped organize a teach-in, worked inside committees, participated in mutual-aid events, and mobilized for multiple rallies and marches (including in D.C.). We also supported encampments and actions at several NYC universities. Workers and students have eagerly taken CHALLENGEs and we have been building relationships with those most open to our line.

Our PLP study group has grown both quantitatively and qualitatively. We are discussing Middle East history, internationalism, and the dangers and divisiveness of identity politics. And we have been developing the leadership of our newer Black and Latin members, led by several women.

The ideological struggle: internationalism vs. nationalism

Recently one of the group's leaders attacked us for distributing our newspaper, even smearing our internationalist position as a form of "soft Zionism," for saying that workers in Palestine and Israel have common class interests. We argued that at least some Israeli workers can be won to support the struggle against genocide. The critic backed off. Our internationalist ideas, our strong ties with our neighbors, and our consistent work paid off.

Many workers and youth in the organization recognize capitalism and imperialism as the roots of the Israeli/U.S. genocide in Gaza. However, many also think the solution is a Palestinian state. We say that workers can never be free under the capitalist profit system, no matter what the ruling class looks like.

Combating anti-communism

At a recent vigil, a newer comrade denounced the lies the U.S. media repeatedly tells about Gaza and the Palestinians: "The same ruling class that lies about Gaza and Palestinians also tells us lies about communism." This connection made sense to many, who nodded and vocalized their agreement. One neighborhood friend requested we change the speaker order so she could agree with our comrade: "It's true," she said, "the rulers lie about communism. To me, communism is communication, community, and collaboration."

The lies about communism by the bosses are meant to keep workers from fighting for the only solution that will smash the capitalist system once and for all. To defeat these imperialists, we must combat the false ideas fed to workers about communism. Speeches calling out capitalism as the root cause of genocide elicited positive responses. To many, that's clear, yet solutions remain unclear. Calling out the bosses' lies

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OUR FIGHT

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.
While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Myanmar:

Imperialist war drives racist refugee crisis

On June 23, rebel forces in Myanmar seized control of Thandwe Airport in western Rakhine State, a logistics hub for the ruling military junta and the gateway to prized coastal resorts. It's just the latest win for the surging anti-junta forces, now estimated to control more than half the largest Southeast Asian country in land mass (The Irrawaddy, 6/25).

While the world watches in horror at the unending, racist U.S.-backed slaughter in Palestine, civil war rages in Myanmar. Well into its third year, the conflict has killed tens of thousands of workers and children, displaced millions more, and made life practically unbearable. Inflation has spiraled out of control. Millions of jobs have been lost since the military takeover, and nearly half the population lives below the poverty line (East Asia Forum, 2/27). With workers denied legitimate opportunities, the cultivation of opium has skyrocketed (NBC News, 5/30).

On the surface, the Myanmar civil war is a battle between a well-armed, brutal military junta and a growing coalition of ethnic-based militias. But closer examination reveals the devastating impact of inter-imperialist competition, with the U.S., Russia, and China vying for influence by funding and arming different warring factions—and spilling the blood of our class every step of the way.

From Myanmar to Sudan to Palestine/Israel, the working class must take up arms to smash our capitalist oppressors. But we must refuse to fight and die for the capitalist bosses' rotten nationalism and liberal democracy. As communist revolutionaries, we emphatically state that the only just war is a class war that overthrows the capitalist exploiters and their whole damn racist system. Workers now fighting in Myanmar must be won to wage a communist revolution led by a mass, international Progressive Labor Party.

Strategic battleground in deadly inter-imperialist rivalry

A former colony of the racist British Empire, sharing a border with capitalist powers China and India, Myanmar (formerly Burma) has long been a point of geopolitical significance. In early 2021, a shaky power-sharing agreement between the civilian government and the powerful military, the Tatmadaw, broke down. The Tatmadaw seized control through a coup d'etat and formed a governing junta.

In the years leading up to the coup, the U.S. imperialists had cozied up to popular misleader Aung San Suu Kyi, the face of the ousted liberal democracy government. The U.S. was looking for a friendly politician to steer the country out of its orbit around China, with whom Myanmar has significant trade and military relations.

But the rising Chinese imperialists weren't so easily pushed out. Determined to solve their "Malacca Dilemma," they've invested tens of billions in Myanmar for roads and gas and oil pipelines. By shipping their Middle East oil imports through Myanmar, China could avoid the Malacca Strait, a chokepoint between Malaysia and Indonesia that might be threatened by the U.S. Navy (China Research Center, 2020).

While China has thrown its formal support behind the ruling generals, it now seems to be hedging its bets. Enter imperialist Russia, a more reliable junta ally. As Myanmar's generals back Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Russian arms companies have made a literal killing by selling weapons to Myanmar, including fighter jets the junta has used to bomb civilian targets (Fulcrum, 11/30/23).

Meanwhile, the declining U.S. bosses have seen their influence wane. U.S. sanctions against Myanmar's oil and gas bosses have minimal impact when the junta can readily tap China and Russia to make up lost revenues (CSIS, 2/6/23).

Capitalist war drives racist refugee crisis

Although Suu Kyi remains under house arrest after the junta removed her from power, the U.S. stands behind the former Nobel Peace Prize winner as a once-and-future foil to the junta and their Chinese and Russian backers. But given Suu Kyi's past complicity in the military's genocide of the Rohingya Muslim minority in Rakhine State, the U.S. condemnation of the junta's human rights abuses falls flat (CFR, 1/31/22).

The plight of Rohingya refugees is one of the most appalling human disasters in recent memory. Over a million people have been forced out of their homes to eke out a wretched existence in concentration camps in neighboring Bangladesh and other countries (Guardian, 2/29).

More than half a million Rohingya remain in Myanmar, caught in the crossfire between the junta and the rebel armies. It is no coincidence that the worst anti-Rohingya attacks have occurred in the unstable Rakhine State, home to deepwater ports financed by China (FirstPost, 1/8). In a perverse twist, the junta is trying to fill their hollowed ranks by forcibly recruiting young Rohingya men, the same workers they've ruthlessly targeted for death and ethnic cleansing (Economist, 6/6). Meanwhile, the racist rebel groups persecute the Rohingya as Muslim workers in a predominantly Buddhist country.

Nationalism: a dead end for the working class

A complex alliance of ethnically based militias has coalesced around the goal of overthrowing the junta and restoring the emerging pre-coup "democracy". To that end, the National Unity government-in-exile (including members of the monstrous Suu Kyi's party) and its military wing, the People's Defense Forces, have recruited many young workers to fight, including some from outside the country (Al Jazeera, 5/17). Spurred by cash incentives, thousands of junta soldiers and police have defected to the other side (BBC, 5/30/23).

But as history repeatedly shows, armed struggles without the explicit goal of communist revolution and workers' power are bound to betray workers' interests. The anti-junta leaders are competing for their own piece of the capitalist pie—in this case, Myanmar's natural abundance of metal ores, precious stones, fossil fuels, and forests. Without antiracist politics leading the way, there will be more waves of violence based on religious and ethnic differences. Only communist leadership, the goal of a classless workers' society, and constant ideological struggle can overcome these capitalist divisions.

One world, one class, one party

Despite their contradictions and the liberal bosses' misleadership, many workers and soldiers have shown great resolve and courage in fighting the junta. Forces. Young workers and students are leaving the cities to join the battles raging in the countryside (NYT, 6/24). Their selfless commitment deserves a better future than any capitalist government can ever offer. They deserve communism! Build Progressive Labor Party and the fight for worker power!

Newark

Nationalist ideas cooked by antiracist fightback

Newark, NJ, June 22- As the threat of World War III looms between the world's superpowers—China, Russia, and the U.S.—and global warming intensifies, fourteen members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), including high school students, gathered to celebrate 65 years of the Party's influence. The event featured struggle stories from workers both locally in Newark and internationally to promote a vision of a unified world under one party, PLP.

The opening speech underscored the significance of the gathering, particularly for those who had been invited from the Rutgers encampment struggles. They noted Rutgers University's decision to dismantle the encampment, as well as recent actions of other "liberal" universities and denounced it as a symptom of rising fascism faced not only by workers in the United States, but internationally for standing up to capitalist genocide of workers in Palestine.

Drawing parallels between current struggles and historical fascism, the speaker contended that the existing capitalist state and political leaders, including liberals and progressives, are increasingly fascist.

For capitalists, 'Free Palestine' reform is a cry to create a new oppressive State

Someone asked, "What is the state?" One participant answered, "The state is an instrument in the hands of the ruling class, used to break the resistance of the rivals of that class." A common liberal solution sold to workers in the Middle East is a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. It came out in the discussion that any state, ruled by Hamas or Zionists, would put wealthy rulers over workers.

Others present asserted that a Palestinian state would be one of 'self-determination,' and not exploitation. We discussed how nationalist revolutions in South Africa, Vietnam and many other places show 'self-determination' is an illusion meant to obfuscate capitalist exploitation. What were once open battlegrounds against the rule of the bosses are today nations ruled by their own bosses exploiting sweatshop workers to make commodities for profit. Similarly in the U.S., workers under capitalism face the illusion that the state can be reformed, framed as freedom to vote Republican or Democrat. This false sense of freedom extends to joining anarchist or reformist groups. Most reformists use gender, nationalist and identity politics to cater to a select group, alienating other groups. These other groups are then pushed to their own respective misleaders, creating a cultural battle of worker against worker with the only winner being the capitalists. The ideal that reforms will save everyone is just an illusion.

Two high school students present, one of whom is involved in their school's model U.N. club, noted how even the supposedly international organizations such as the U.N. just provide another illusion for workers. They said that while the U.N. appears to be a consensus-based organization made up of many states, it really is dominated by five 'permanent members' who have veto power over any proposal. These permanent members unsurprisingly include some of the wealthiest concentrations of capital on earth: The United States, China, Russia, The United Kingdom and France.

At our Progressive Labor Party(PLP) gathering in New Jersey we celebrated 65 years of PLP's revolutionary history, discussing our communist vision of a world run by the international working class versus self determination for local capitalists.

For workers in Palestine, only communism can bring freedom from class oppression

The discussion then highlighted the benefits of communist centralism. This approach, it was argued, examines issues from multiple angles, offering a comprehensive, class-conscious solution to material conditions. Someone talked about the important experience during the encampments of the communist-style organization of food, security, and prohibition of photographs by provocateurs. Resources were supplied and organized collectively based on those able to do so and distributed collectively based on need. History shows that such communist centralism is efficient enough to defeat capitalist enemies, such as the Red Army defeating the whites in Russia or the communists defeating the nationalist Kuomintang in China because of the fragmented nature of the capitalist opposition. One critique given about the encampments was that their demands often lacked clear organization and were often dominated by reformism—that is demands without a revolutionary end in sight and leave the capitalist state intact.

Local fights build a vision of a world led by workers

Also noted during the discussion was students' courageous fight-back while police called by universities from California to New Jersey took hours to arrive only to stand idly by while armed provokers viciously attacked students.

Workers have a compelling choice to make: 1) Accept the "freedom" of self-determination: In this vision, capitalism with all its delusions, oppression, super-exploitation, apartheid, and mass genocide would prevail. OR 2) Join the FIGHT FOR A UNIFIED WORLD UNDER ONE PARTY LED BY PLP. Communism entails the Party leading every facet of society. To achieve this, millions of workers must become organizers for communism. Victory involves collaborating with the working class, recognizing both progress and shortcomings. It means organizing and educating others to resist capitalism at work, in our communities. It means involving in mass organizations, having friends over to your home and joining PLP in building a communist future.

Uptown Vigil

Bury the genocidal capitalist system

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around communism is necessary to see that the communist revolution is the only solution for our collective liberation.

"We need an organization": The communist Progressive Labor Party

Ideological struggle is important, but we need more working-class fighters to join the Progressive Labor Party. The international working class needs an organization. An organization is necessary to defeat the bosses who hold up this crumbling capitalist system. We have much to learn from our fellow workers' experiences and much to teach from over 150 years of communist workers' struggle. But one lesson from history is clear. To beat the capitalists we need a communist party to channel all the voices calling for revolution and lead workers to take power. We need a mass party: PLP!

Looking Forward

Our plans going forward are to continue to work inside this organization to build the struggle against the Israeli/U.S. genocide in Gaza. But we are in this struggle to win people, not arguments. With our many points of unity, as we get to know people better, we hope to convince them that communism is the only solution to liberating workers around the world. We want to build a mass communist party to lead revolutions from Palestine to Haiti to Sudan and throughout the world. So we need as many workers and youth as possible to join the PLP and make it stronger.

The struggle against capitalism is long-range and we need to collectively continue to increase our strength. Bonds of trust and camaraderie that we build now will help us overcome obstacles in building a new society. When we unite as one international working class, we have nothing to lose but our chains and no one can hold us back!

Inglewood, CA

Lesson learned: shut down the racist profit system, not schools

Inglewood, CA, June 28, 2024 —Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members and friends attended a teach-in about the school closures in Inglewood which was led by community members. During the event, parents and their children along with other community members and teachers joined the event which included speeches, a PowerPoint presentation, chanting, and a planning session for future events.

The Inglewood school district was taken over by the state of California in 2012. Community members have been concerned in the more recent history that the school board they have elected has no power. Like many other predominantly Black and Latin working-class cities, the City of Inglewood Unified School District (USD) was taken over by the State of California. In return for a loan of $55 million from the State, Inglewood USD agreed to be put in "receivership" and give up control to a State-appointed administrator. A condition of reestablishing local control is payment in full of the loan.

The current boss of the schools is James Morris, L.A. County Superintendent. It is Morris who has devised the plan to close one of the city's two high schools, and four elementary schools effective at the end of the 2024-2025 school year. Meanwhile, Inglewood USD continues to pay off the loan at exorbitant interest rates, with a final payment expected to be made in 2034!

Leading up to the event, PLP members helped to plan the teach-in and included their base members. One high school student joined the planning meeting and gave her honest assessment that the struggle should include more young people. We discussed how to care for the children at the event which included games and story time. People on the planning committee agreed with PLP that it's important to expose young children to books and stories that talk about why it's necessary to be involved in antiracist struggles against bosses.

The event started with a speaker who had been involved in the struggle from the beginning because her daughter's school was closing. The speech included information on the connection between the new stadiums that have been built in Inglewood (So-Fi Stadium and Intuit Dome) and the closings. All of the schools closing are in the zone of these new stadiums; some are even torn down and the land turned into parking lots.

Workers protest racist school closing as bosses favor sports stadiums over education. Under communism education will be a lifetime process as workers run society.

The next speaker was a student who currently attends a high school in Inglewood. This young person gave a passionate speech about the fact that she would not be able to play basketball for the school she had her heart set on going to. She made connections about the profit-hungry corporations who want the school space for parking lots as well as the politicians who are complicit because they refuse to oppose carrying out the racist plans to shut down schools and their abject refusal to meet with concerned parents and students. The student's speech was followed by an in-depth presentation discussing other districts across California that are also suffering school closings. The presentation brought out the fact that every school district under state control was disproportionately Black and/or Latin. A statewide coalition of concerned parents and community members has organized ways to fight against the closings and help people become more active in their communities.

Following the speeches and presentations, there was a period of open-mic time. A student, who attended this year's May Day event in Los Angeles spoke on the mic about her siblings who are going to be affected by the school closings. She spoke about how the politicians are more concerned with lining their pockets than they are with making sure there are enough qualified teachers in the classrooms. She also included the analysis that these schools are run like businesses. She understands that under the system of capitalism, profit is primary and things like education, particularly for Black and Brown students, are expendable. Another Party member, who is also a member of the Lennox-Inglewood Tenants' Union (LITU), spoke about the housing crisis that exists for Inglewood families. As these stadiums are built and racist gentrification spreads [the city continues to become gentrified, rent and housing prices are skyrocketing. Many families have no other choice but to leave Inglewood. As the schools' population decreases, the State and County overlord district is choosing to close the schools rather than finding ways to help keep families where they are and work on increasing the school population. Members of LITU attended the event because they too saw the connection between rent increases and school closures.

The only thing that will ensure schools are not being closed down is to build a world without the profit-motive. The majority of students cannot learn under capitalism. With school closures, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of supplies, working-class students across the world are and have always been forced to become cogs in the wheel of capitalism. Teachers in PLP need to continue to organize students and co-workers to join PLP so that we can set up a communist education system that abolishes racism and fosters learning, creativity, and critical thinking.

South Bronx

Scratch a liberal pol, find a fascist thug

THE BRONX, NY, June 22– Around 100 workers gathered in the South Bronx to protest the hypocrisy of liberal fascist misleaders Senator Bernie Sanders and House Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Jamaal Bowman, and Nydia Velásquez, who hosted a rally shortly before the Democratic Primaries last week. While all four of these con artists pay lip service to voting for a ceasefire in Gaza, they have put their full support behind President Joe Biden by endorsing his bloodthirsty presidential campaign. These so-called progressives are exposing themselves as the main danger to the working class. They use the language of fake leftism to pacify workers into accepting reformist crumbs all while propelling our class toward world war and fascism.

We handed out CHALLENGE and made some contacts, including one who is interested in protesting at the Republican National Convention with us. Afterward, we had a study group with 22 workers and students in which we read and discussed "Black Workers' Leadership: Key Revolutionary Force." The study group allowed us to contrast the rally's multicultural rainbow of capitalist misleaders with the need for multiracial working-class unity and the importance of Black workers' leadership in the march toward communist revolution. One thing workers and students alike agreed on is that racism is a tool of the bosses that hurts all workers. We discussed how anti-Black racism shows up in our everyday lives and the division that it creates within the working class.

Liberals are the main danger

In addition to endorsing Genocide Joe, AOC, and Bowman have contributed to the lie that the fightback against Zionism and genocide in Gaza is anti-Jewish racism, better known as anti-semitism, by condemning a protest against the Nova Exhibition's fascist propaganda earlier this month. (CBS News, 6/12) One worker we met walking into the rally expressed surprise that we were attending a protest against AOC, and when one comrade responded that she had endorsed Biden, he said, "Well, she'll get on the right side before November." This delusional outlook is exactly why these "progressive" liberals are so dangerous to our class. They are effective in pushing well-meaning workers to vote for one of two flavors of fascism instead of building a workers' world.

No end to genocide in a capitalist system

Protest organizers demanded that these misleaders drop their endorsement of Joe Biden, and some attendees passed out fliers promoting alternative "socialist" candidates. These candidates promote reforms like reducing the U.S. military budget to 10 percent— as if we should be demanding merely a reduction in the mass slaughter of workers from American bombs! There will be no end to genocide and imperialist war in a capitalist system, no matter who is president. Capitalism needs extreme nationalism, racism, and ultimately world war and genocide to churn profits for the ruling class.

We need an international communist revolution, not nationalist liberation

Workers around the world recognize the dangers of Israeli nationalism and are fighting back. We must join these workers in smashing the fascist Israeli state. Simultaneously, we cannot turn to Palestinian nationalism instead. Protest organizers championed the United Nations resolution 37/43, which calls for the "legitimacy of the struggles of peoples for...national unity." There will never be real unity between the ruling class and the working class of any nation. The Palestinian bosses will never build a society that the workers of Palestine need and deserve.

Trouble for liberal fascists

Back in 2016, Bernie Sanders and his multicultural "squad" of liberal fascists were able to draw huge crowds. This tiny rally of just a few hundred is an embarrassing loss for this wing of the ruling class. As the United States' imperialist tentacles on the rest of the world weaken, the liberal fascists will be forced to resort to even more suppression and violence against the working class.

Workers have no future under capitalism, which will continue to splatter our blood on its racist borders and turn our bodies to ashes. Join us in the fight for communism, so that we can turn world war into class war and build a world free of genocide.

Struggle Letter

From Palestine to Stonewall, liberation means communism

NEW YORK CITY, June 30— In the face of a nauseatingly capitalist-loving Pride march, an antiracist, antisexist group of Progressive Labor Party attracted passersby with the chant "no pride in capitalism" and the front page headline "communism is liberation." To smash sexism in all forms, we need to smash the root cause of divisions and discrimination: class society.

Our goals for this action included a) for some of us to try to meet anti-genocide protesters in the empire-loving main march, b) link up with any remaining PL'ers and friends from the liberation march at Family Pride, and c) bring some communist ideas throughout. We distributed CHALLENGEs and flyers. Many walked up to us for conversations, and we even met a long-lost PL'er from four decades ago who described his involvement in PLP as "the best time of my life."

The lesson is clear: our class is in search of the ideas and practices that will free all of us. That's communism! By breaking the chains of profit and smashing the ruling-class dictatorship across all borders, our class can begin to build a world that enables us to live as our whole selves. No matter the struggle, our enemy has one true identity: capitalism. We must crush capitalism in order to live.

Queer identity politics and capitalism can coexist. Only with communism when workers run all of society; will we be rid of racism and sexism in all of its toxic forms.

To smash sexism, we must unite

But first, some definitions. "Queer" is an all-inclusive way to refer to people across the spectrum of sexuality and gender. "Identity politics"is using one's socially-constructed identity (as opposed to their class position) as the basis for unity and organizing. "Capitalism" is the inherently violent system of two opposing class forces: the exploiter and the exploited.

Queer identity politics and capitalism can gaily coexist. Case in point: the fourth largest weapons company in the world, Boeing, whose bombs are murdering our class in Gaza, sponsored the St. Louis Pride parade (The Nation, 6/27).

While the U.S.-Israel commits genocide of 38,514 Palestinian workers & children, the Pride parade here—which originated from the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion(!)—basks in the blood money from some of Israel's diehard supporters: JP morgan Chase bank, Deutsche Bank, mastercard, L'Oreal Group, and more. It's not revolutionary to merely expose the capitalist nature of Pride; it is, however, a start.

While the Queer Liberation March started in 1994 in its attempt to break away from the corporate and state-sponsored nature of Pride, it too chokes under its own democratic and coalition-building paradigm. The international PLP differs from this by its rejection of both identity politics and electoral politics. Refuse to be misled by any group of politicians, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, and culture! Refuse anything short of communist liberation of all members of our class! We do this by engaging in fightback, building working-class consciousness, nurturing relationships, recruiting to PLP, and committing ourselves to serve our class.

Queer as in crush capitalism

Next year, we can organize to march in the Queer Liberation March under the banner of communism. Wherever we connect our local struggles to international struggles, we chip away at the borders (mental, physical, social) that divide us. Let's gooo, qomrades!

Graduation Speech

Students, you are the fire of the world

The following excerpted speech was given at graduation in a Black working-class school where a former student Claude was killed in the streets of Brooklyn capitalism. For a year, students have been fighting to keep his memory alive in the face of multiple memorial tear-downs by the school administration (see CHALLENGE. This speech was originally adapted from a comrade's 2020 speech. While it's a different school with a different scenario, the essence of the message is the same.*

...You started out as tiny boxes on a zoom...You grew from little pixels to full humans...You have endured so much to get here, to survive here, but the struggle is just getting started...And I want to leave you with some words to live by...

Never forget—you are the light, the glimmer, the fire. Nothing exemplifies your character more than how the class of 2024 responded to Claude's death...

You proved what we've known to be true all along—that Claude's life matters, that no kid is expendable, that when young people unite, their voices will be heard. That the very system that kills kids in the streets is the same system that kills kids overseas.

Looking at where our society is today—I'm sorry we haven't done enough to make this a world that deserves you.

The society you are inheriting is one of crisis and war. It's like a sunken place that tries to consume you in its darkness and lies. We live in a world where it's "normal" to commit genocide, but it's "unreasonable" to remember the dead. Too often, we are too quiet, too cold, too cool. This world tries to bury us.

Bury us with passivity.

Bury us with deportations.

Bury us with racism and sexism.

But there's one thing that can never be buried—your light.

In all of us, there are always two competing forces, and you'll need to choose which side will win out for you. Class of 2024, choose life because you are the fire of the world.

So, when you get to college and they tell you that class is too difficult for you, or no one did that before, or you are going to fail, prove them wrong—take that class, get that A, show them you're the glimmer! Blaze that trail!

So, when you go to the military or your job and you witness injustice but they tell you to just shut up and take it, shut that idea down, show them you are the glimmer.

When they tell the victim-blame the latest target of street or racist violence and tell you to go on like it's business as usual— REJECT that. Disrupt the flow, go to the rally, START the march, and show them you're the glimmer!

When they tell you to look out only for yourself, REJECT that. Take time to connect with someone who feels isolated in our society, and show them you're the light!

When they tell you, "Oh you are too much or not enough," hun, you are just right. Life is too short to play it safe, too precious to get swallowed up in anxiety or frozen up in shame. Take that leap...Say what you mean. Mean what you say. Live your life. Light the way!

When they tell you it's natural to live in a segregated society—Black here, white there—break the mold. Live an integrated life, fight for an integrated college, an integrated workspace, and an integrated circle of family and friends, show them you're the light!

When they try to tell you who it's okay/not okay to love or be with, show them you're the light!

When they try to tell you who belongs on this stolen land, shut that down. Show them you're the light!

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Biden is bringing World War III

A few words on the debate. Surprise! Trump told some lies. One was his false, racist claim that immigrants getting benefits is what's threatening the future solvency of Social Security.

The truth is that immigrants pay significantly more in taxes than they receive in benefits. Undocumented immigrants, in particular, pay an estimated $11.6 billion a year in taxes, but are not eligible for most benefit programs.

On the other hand, Trump told the truth when he said that Biden is bringing World War III much closer. However, Trump distorted the reason for this. He said it's because world powers in competition with the U.S. — like China and Russia - don't respect or fear Biden. That's not the point.

The real reason Biden is bringing WWIII closer is that Biden upholds the needs of the wealthiest and most powerful finance capitalists, like JP Morgan Chase and Citigroup. Those imperialists have investments all around the world, profiting hugely from cheap labor, expropriating natural resources, and controlling markets.

Those top U.S. capitalists will do anything to try maintaining domination globally. They're willing to sacrifice our lives - and the lives of our sisters and brothers in the working class around the world — in a desperate effort, including nuclear war, to preserve their empire and global dominance.

The conclusion: neither Trump nor Biden - nor any politician who may replace Biden at the Democratic Convention - is worthy of our support. They all serve the capitalist system. That system has to go!

Don't forget Trump is dangerous

The Capitalist Class and its stewardship threatens the working class. Unfortunately we are allowing CHALLENGE to focus on the liberal wing of the ruling class, Biden and the Democratic Party.

But there are two or more wings of the ruling class and a critique of the Trump plan to reshape the United States poses an immediate threat as well which not all members of the working class understand if we go by the increasing numbers of unemployed and employed workers, white, Latin and Black who are considering voting for him.

The situation is complex, but in my opinion, short term the greatest threat to the working class is the Trump populism that is proposing to jail the left and refashion the machinery of government in the image of the mafia (proposing to change Civil Service rules etc.).

The Party should provide a long term blueprint of transforming our current social and economic system at the same time, it must not fail to tackle our immediate tasks.

CHALLENGE RESPONDS

It would be a dishonor to our history to have an "attack Trump now and deal with Biden later" approach. The Old Communist Movement, in their rightful anger against rising fascism, mistakenly formed a United Front with liberal bosses against the Nazis, which resulted in only fortifying the bosses' system. Once the Red Army defeated the Nazis, those same liberal bosses turned on the communist movement.

Knowing what we know today, we can't ideologically disarm our class like that. We need to have confidence in the working class to be able to fight for the most advanced position—now and later.

So yes, fascist Donald Trump is and continues to be a danger. All the U.S. liberal media will agree. Despite how he seems at the debate, Jim Crow Biden is no toothless animal. This wolf in sleepy sheep's clothing has the most powerful of U.S. billionaires of finance capital backing him. He is also overseeing the genocidal slaughter of over 35,000 Palestinians, and greenlighting billons in weapons for the Israeli fascist state. It's the liberal fascist Biden administration who is unleashing its fascist police dogs and using their judicial system to attack workers who oppose it (see article on page

In addition to winning people over to the fact that the problem isn't just Trump or Biden, that it's capitalism, the most immediate task is to fight attacks on our class (from all sides) and build PLP. We have Summer Projects organized around the Republican National Convention and the Democratic National Convention to fight against both the Small and Big Fascists.

Juneteenth is beginning of Jim Crow

I have a suggestion regarding the Juneteenth holiday. The ruling class has co-opted Juneteenth, calling it "a celebration of the end of slavery." However, I think it should be called the end of chattel slavery and the beginning of Jim Crow slavery. Similarly, the Civil Rights movement was the end of Jim Crow slavery and the beginning of identity politics slavery. Even the New York Times has printed multiple articles documenting how health care, wages, public education, and so much more are so much worse for Black and brown people. The only thing the NYT leaves out is that capitalism is the root cause of these conditions AND that only communism will abolish this shameful history.

We need to highlight another shameful event in capitalist history that happened 71 years ago on Juneteenth . On June 19, 1953 the U.S. rulers murdered communist heroes Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. The Rosenbergs were accused of giving the Soviet Union the supposed "KEY" to the atomic bomb. According to the accusation, the Soviets were "too stupid and incapable" of figuring out how to construct a nuclear weapon. In fact, just 4 years later, the "stupid and incapable" Soviets launched the first artificial satellite (Sputnik) and 4 years after that the "stupid and incapable" Soviets launched the first astronaut (Yuri Gargarin) and brought him safely back to Earth.

Creating a nuclear weapon is VERY complicated. The Rosenbergs had no knowledge of non-nuclear physics and most certainly no knowledge of nuclear physics. There is no way that they could have understood any of the complicated equations and descriptions of the bomb design process. Moreover, the one piece of so-called "evidence" that was produced at the trial was a FLAWED diagram of one component of the bomb that the Rosenbergs were accused of giving to the Soviets.

The U.S. government was sure that the Rosenbergs would confess in return for life imprisonment rather than death. But the Rosenbergs refused the government's phony "offer," instead proclaiming their innocence. The Rosenbergs were working class heroes who should be remembered for their refusal to go along with the Cold War motivated accusation that they were Soviet spies. That is why on Juneteenth we should also honor the sacrifices of these communists along with those of Black enslaved workers who sacrificed their lives fighting this racist system built on slavery.

RED EYE ON THE INTERNET

You know an empire is in shambles when elections are a choice between an aging genocidal fascist who forgets his script and an unhinged, aging fascist clown with rhetoric that comes straight from the Hitler playbook. PLP says it should reject both fascists and fight for communism.

There is no pride in genocide and no queer liberation in a violent system that breeds gender oppression & violence 365 days of the year.

PLP: your fighting party—join us

Continued from page 8

'68, and '69, with two main goals: first to educate anti-war students about the true nature of the working class and the need to unite with workers; second, to bring anti-war, anti-imperialist politics to the working class. In a limited way, the "Work-ins" were quite successful. The student participants shed many reactionary illusions about workers, not the least of which was the boss-promoted slander that workers were racist, reactionary "oafs" incapable of understanding their class interests. Workers who met Work-in participants saw the potential for uniting with anti-war students and communists. The bosses went nuts, releasing several official documents revealing their panic at the prospect of workers and students uniting massively to oppose the war. PLP argued that this panic alone indicated we were on the right track.

* Within SDS, an increasingly sharp debate began to emerge around this issue. PLP argued for unity with workers in industry, transportation, and communications, and to concretize this unity by supporting strikes in auto, other heavy industries, telephone (the computer was still two decades away as a mass item), hospitals, etc. SDS's "right-wing" (as we called it) opposed this position, arguing that the "traditional" working class had become obsolete, that it was hopelessly reactionary, and that "the real hope for revolution" lay in the "new working class" of alienated intellectuals and professionals. The main spokesperson for this nonsense was Herbert Marcuse, a former German social democrat who had emigrated to the U.S. and became a professor in California. The bosses happily anointed him the ideologue of the "New Left." They promoted his ideas and his book One-Dimensional Man, even featuring him on the cover of Time Magazine. PLP continued to fight for the Worker-Student Alliance and to organize militant action that reflected the class position that the working class could never become obsolete as long as capitalism spirals into crisis, degrading the labor conditions for workers and pushing more segments of our class into more precarious jobs.

Throughout the war, the Progressive Labor Party, which had launched the first mass demonstration against the war in 1964, played a crucial ideological, political, and practical role within SDS and the anti-war movement in general. PLP gained experience, advanced its political line, and recruited large numbers of students and others to its ranks. Many remain Party members and leaders nearly four decades later.

U.S. BOSSES OUT OF ASIA!

Smash Racist Unemployment!

CHALLENGE

The Revolutionary Communist Newspaper

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Rally to break away from liberal politicians!

see below & back

RALLY

3pm April 24

6th St. & Pennsylvania Ave.

RALLY AT: Employment Security Bldg

CHALLENGE newspaper clipping from March 1971 showing thousands of workers marching against racist unemployment in Washington, DC

Many PL'ers who were recruited in the '60s and '70s recently led a forum called the Lessons from 1968 and beyond. Look out for the article in the next issue of CHALLENGE.

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Fight for East Africa heating up

Al Jazeera, 6/30–Paramilitary forces battling Sudan's army for more than a year say they have captured a key state capital in the war-torn country's southeast. "We have liberated the 17th Infantry Division from Singa [the capital of Sennar state]," the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) announced on X on Saturday. Al Jazeera's Hiba Morgan…said the RSF is gaining control of an increasing number of territories across Sudan, especially in eastern and western parts of the country's south. "They already control a large portion of the Darfur region, with the exception of el-Fasher, which is the only remaining city under the army's and allied groups' control," she said.

Sudan has been gripped by war since April 2023, when fighting erupted between forces loyal to army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the RSF led by his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo. The conflict in the country of 48 million has killed tens of thousands, displaced millions and triggered one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

The latest RSF breakthrough means they are closing in on Port Sudan on the Red Sea, where the army, government and the United Nations agencies are now based.

U.S. ally Ruto cracks down on Kenyan workers

Foreign Affairs, 6/28– Tuesday was one of the deadliest days in Kenya's recent history. An estimated two dozen people were slain—some in front of the Kenyan parliament and others in Nairobi's slums. They were killed by the country's security forces for exercising their human rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. It was the culmination of a week's violence, during which young protesters opposing new taxes and the government's excesses were abducted, arrested, beaten, shot, and tear-gassed.

Kenyan President William Ruto threatened to intensify the repression. He denounced the protests as "treasonous," smeared its participants as "criminals," and ominously directed the security forces to "deploy all measures." Police moved from using tear gas to live ammunition.

The spark for the latest protests was the introduction of a new finance bill that would levy punishing taxes on everyday essentials, including sugar, bread, and cooking oil—a policy that would hit poor Kenyans particularly hard. The same bill set aside vast sums for the renovation of the president's residence and other extravagant expendituresBBC, 6/26–Haiti's interim Prime Minister Garry Conille has vowed to end lawlessness with the help of a Kenyan-led international force deployed to the Caribbean nation…400 Kenyan police officers, in the first tranche of an international force, was a "unique opportunity" to restore order, Mr Conille said…

But there is fierce opposition in Kenya to the deployment - not least because police are accused of brutality in their own country, the latest example being the fatal shooting of protesters in the capital, Nairobi, on Tuesday…

Working with Haitian police, and headquartered at a US-built base, the Kenyan officers will aim to take back key sites that have fallen under the control of gangs, including the nearby airport and sea ports. Although Kenya has a history of taking part in peacekeeping missions, its police force has never set foot outside Africa.

Bosses continue fight for resource-rich DR Congo

The Guardian, 6/29–Rwandan-backed M23 rebels have seized a strategic town in the Democratic Republic of Congo's volatile east, a local official said. "Kanyabayonga has been in the hands of the M23 since Friday evening," the administrative official said, under condition of anonymity. Kanyabayonga lies on the northern front of the conflict in North Kivu province, which has been rocked by violence since 2021 when the M23 (March 23 Movement) resumed its armed campaign in the region. The town is considered a pathway to the major commercial centres of Butembo and Beni in the north.

Clashes "are causing displacement of civilians," the UN Joint Human Rights Office said in its monthly report on Friday. "Humanitarian organizations providing support to the displaced have suspended their operations for security reasons," it said.

PLP: YOUR FIGHTING PARTY —JOIN US

More than 3,000 people organized by the Progressive Labor Party marched down 7th Street NW on March 21, 1971 from Banneker Recreation Center to the Ellipse in Washington, DC demanding an end to the Vietnam War and an end to racist unemployment.

The following article was part of a twelve-part series entitled A short history of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) and its activities in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) first published in CHALLENGE in early 2007.

By the fall of 1967, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) chapters had sprung up on hundreds of U.S. college campuses. A vigorous debate ensued on the tactics of anti-war activity. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members advocated the principle that tactics flowed from politics, and that class allegiance held the key to politics.

From the very beginning, PLP stood alone in fighting for a "Worker-Student Alliance." This position had several practical consequences:

* U.S. bosses got their cannon fodder for the Vietnam War through a military draft. However, college students could enjoy a "2-S" student deferment. PLP argued that a principled anti-war position required refusing this class privilege. PLP'ers rejected it individually and as a mass position. As a result, many PLP members were drafted. The military brass deemed some unfit for military service for "political reasons." Others entered the military and organized against the war on the inside. PLP's principled position against the 2-S deferment won widespread respect throughout the movement, including the grudging admiration of the Party's right-wing opponents within SDS.

* From the start, PLP also vigorously opposed the position of the "official" leadership of the anti-war movement, that "Stop the bombing and negotiate" was the only mass line that could mobilize large numbers of people within the U.S. The Party also argued that this was an imperialist war and not just a "mistake" by some politicians. PLP argued that as an imperialist invader, the U.S. ruling class had no right to negotiate a blade of grass in Vietnam; and that the only viable demand was "U.S. out NOW!" This struggle around this principle—correct as far as it went -- was to have significant consequences several years later when the Vietnamese "communist" leadership began negotiations with the Nixon administration.

* During the late 1960s, spontaneous working-class militancy was mushrooming, with industrial strikes, inner-city uprisings, and rebellion within the imperialist military. PLP took the lead in arguing that students should support these struggles, particularly with concrete action.

* PLP organized summer "Work-in" projects in 1967,

Continued on page 7

WRITE FOR CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

The next deadline is night of Friday, July 12

Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.

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